
 **JAPAN MEDIA
HIGHLIGHTS**

Afternoon Alert - Thursday, January 18, 2018

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HEADLINES

Noon news

NHK led with a report on the South Korean media reaction to the agreement reached at the working-level talks between North and South Korea. NTV, Fuji TV, and TV Asahi gave top play to reports that sumo grand champion Hakuho will withdraw from the current tournament today. TBS led with a report that Secretary of Defense Mattis said during a dinner held on the eve of the Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Vancouver that the U.S. military is ready for North Korea and that there is an operation plan in place. The network said the Secretary also expressed hope to resolve the matter through diplomatic means.

INTERNATIONAL

Suga comments on first anniversary of President Trump's inauguration

NHK reported on its website that Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga commented during a press briefing this morning on the fact that Jan. 20 marks the first anniversary of President Trump's inauguration. He reportedly said the U.S.-Japan relationship "is the strongest in history due to the strong relationship of trust between Prime Minister Abe and President Trump" and that "in particular, both leaders are one hundred percent in sync with regard to the North Korean issue." Suga also said that Japan "hopes to further strengthen and develop the solid U.S.-Japan relationship on the security and economic fronts under the unshakable relationship of trust between the two leaders." In response to a question from a reporter about whether keeping pace with the Trump administration, which is calling for maximized pressure, will be risky for Japan on account of how the North may react, Suga reportedly responded by saying: "There is no risk whatsoever in strengthening the U.S.-Japan alliance."

Defense Secretary Mattis indicates U.S. has "war plan" for North Korea, but

reiterates diplomatic solution should be prioritized

NHK reported at noon that according to U.S. and Japanese diplomatic sources, Secretary of Defense Mattis made remarks during a dinner held on the eve of the Vancouver Foreign Ministers' Meeting indicating that the U.S. has a "war plan" for North Korea. At the same time, the Secretary reportedly reiterated the position that a peaceful resolution through diplomatic efforts should be prioritized.

The network quoted Chief Cabinet Secretary Suga as saying at a press conference this morning: "I am not aware of the specific details, so I should not make any comment on behalf of the government." Suga reportedly added: "It was extremely significant that at this meeting the international community united and conveyed the message that North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons is not acceptable and that it will maximize pressure on the North."

- [Australian PM Turnbull in Japan for security, defense talks with Abe](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Kono: "Vancouver agreement to continue to put pressure on DPRK significant"](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Japan-U.S.-ROK unity against North Korea dampened by North-South talks](#) (Mainichi)
- [U.S. consistent in support for Japan, ROK comfort women accord: CCS Suga](#) (Nikkei)
- [Gist of Japan-ROK foreign ministerial in Vancouver, Jan. 17](#) (Sankei)
- [Philippine Pres. vows to take step on comfort women statue](#) (Jiji Press)
- [INTERVIEW: Japan wants meaningful dialogue with N. Korea on abductions](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Two men suspected of illegal exports to North Korea](#) (Asahi, Evening edition)
- [Editorial: Turn renewal of Japan-US nuclear pact into chance to reconsider reprocessing](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Distance from Abe: Xi can't hide his mistrust of Japan under smile](#) (Nikkei)
- [Japanese lawmaker heads for Indonesia on 60th diplomatic anniv.](#) (Kyodo News)

ECONOMY

- [TPP 11 in final coordination to shelve 22 items in bid to sign accord in early](#)

March (Sankei)

- [Transport Minister Keiichi Ishii sees opportunities for Japanese firms in U.S. infrastructure investment](#) (The Japan Times)
- [U.S. firm to supply coal to new power plants in Fukushima](#) (Jiji Press)
- [Thailand suggests slower bullet train amid high cost estimate](#) (Nikkei Asian Review)

SCIENCE

- [Japan successfully launches Epsilon-3 rocket to put satellite into orbit](#) (Kyodo News)

POLITICS

- [Prime minister's schedule on Jan. 16-17, 2018](#) (Nikkei)
- [Alliance negotiations between 2 Japanese opposition parties break down](#) (Kyodo News)
- [CDPJ forms new parliamentary group in Upper House](#) (Yomiuri)
- [Foreign Minister Kono gradually showing his imprint](#) (Sankei)

SOCIETY

- [Japan's crime rate hits record low amid plunge in thefts](#) (Kyodo News)
- [Mori Building Co. holds disaster drill with local Roppongi Hills international community in mind](#) (The Japan Times)
- [Cartoon: Sumo scandal](#) (Kanagawa Shimbun)

SECURITY

- [Evacuation drill held at elementary school near MCAS Futenma](#) (NHK)
- [Japan to expand MSDF 'strategic port calls' in Indian, Pacific oceans to boost free navigation](#) (The Mainichi)
- [Komeito urges Suga to ask U.S. to suspend military aircraft flights if accident occurs again](#) (Tokyo Shimbun)
- [Gov't to draft new cybersecurity strategies within fiscal year](#) (Mainichi)

**OKINAWA LOCAL
PRESS**

U.S. shipping company celebrates launching new service connecting Naha

Ryukyu Shimpo wrote that Matson, an American owned and operated transportation services company, held a reception at a Naha hotel on Tuesday to celebrate its launch in September 2017 of a new weekly service to the port of Naha as part of its expedited China-Long Beach express service. Representatives of local companies and the port transport industry participated in the event. Matson's President and CEO Matthew Cox reportedly told the reception that the company has long striven to add Naha as a new port of call and will construct cooperative relationships with local people to contribute to the economic development of the region. Senior Vice President Vic Angoco reportedly said at the reception that senior company executives' attendance at the event demonstrates Matson's resolve to make a commitment to the development of the island prefecture.

